



## MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

1800 Washington Boulevard • Baltimore MD 21230

410-537-3000 • 1-800-633-6101

Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr.  
Governor

Michael S. Steele  
Lt. Governor

Kendl P. Philbrick  
Secretary

Jonas A. Jacobson  
Deputy Secretary

June 30, 2004

Dear Concerned Citizen:

This letter is to update you on the sampling and investigation activities related to the methyl tertiary-butyl ether (MTBE) contamination in the Upper Crossroads area of Fallston. The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) and Harford County Health Department continue investigating the source and overseeing the corrective actions. Although MTBE has not been determined to be a health risk at the levels currently being detected, and may not even be a health risk at much higher concentrations, MDE and the Harford County Health Department take this issue seriously.

### MTBE Health Concerns

In reviewing the research on MTBE's health effects, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has concluded that there is no measurable health effect from low level MTBE exposure in drinking water. EPA's health advisory states that levels of contamination at or below 20 ppb provide a large margin of safety from adverse health effects.

### Sampling Update

The first round of drinking water well sampling has been completed. This round of sampling has found nine (9) wells with levels above the State action level for MTBE of 20 parts per billion (ppb). This action level is based on taste and odor. Seventy (70) wells have been found to contain a level of MTBE below the State action level and 81 wells that have been tested and found to have no MTBE. A second round of sampling is now being performed at these locations to confirm the initial results. Additional sampling beyond the 0.5-mile radius is being performed to test homes on dead end streets and cul-de-sacs.

### MTBE Source Investigation

MDE has determined that ExxonMobil is at least partly responsible for the MTBE being found in the groundwater in this area, although other potential sources are being investigated. ExxonMobil was required to install filtration systems on the nine (9) wells with MTBE over the State action level. The company is also installing filtration systems on wells with any detections of MTBE.

ExxonMobil has installed a Soil Vacuum Extraction (SVE) system at the service station. This system is removing soil vapors from around the underground storage systems and treating the vapors before exhausting them into the air. MDE has required ExxonMobil to submit a Subsurface Investigation Work Plan by July 14, 2004 to be reviewed by MDE. The plan must propose how ExxonMobil will further characterize the groundwater flow conditions in the area, the geologic conditions, and the travel of the subsurface MTBE. Implementation of the approved plan must take place by August 2004 under MDE's oversight.

A copy of the Department's files related to this issue are being made available to the public. Copies will be placed at the Harford County Public Library, Fallston Branch, 1461 Fallston Road and the Harford County Health Department. A fact sheet and other site information is available on MDE's website at:

[http://www.mde.state.md.us/Programs/LandPrograms/Oil\\_Control/RemediationSites](http://www.mde.state.md.us/Programs/LandPrograms/Oil_Control/RemediationSites)

Should you have additional questions regarding this investigation please contact the following:

Maryland Department of the Environment, Oil Control Program  
(Yolande Norman or Susan Bull) 410-537-3442

Harford County Health Department, Bureau of Environmental Health 443-643-0322

ExxonMobil Information Line 1-877-294-8612

Finally, I want to assure you that MDE and Harford County are, and will continue to be, focused on this matter to ensure that the MTBE contamination and public health issues are fully addressed. We are committed to working with members of the Fallston community during the investigative process and providing regular written updates, as information is available.

Very truly yours,



Kendl P. Philbrick  
Secretary

cc: The Honorable James Harkins  
The Honorable J. Robert Hooper  
The Honorable Joanne S. Parrott  
The Honorable Veronica L. Chenoweth  
Dr. Andrew Bernstein  
Ms. Susan Kelly